

CLAIMS

1. A lawn and garden implement comprising:

a lawnmower having a deck, a mower handle extending upwardly from said deck to facilitate manipulating said lawnmower, an engine supported by said deck, a cutting blade under said deck and rotating under the influence of said engine, a discharge opening in said deck through which vegetation clippings cut by said cutting blade may escape from under said deck;

a collecting apparatus for collecting said clippings, said collecting apparatus including a plurality of substantially rigid walls at least partially defining a collection space, a collecting opening communicating with said collection space, and at least one wheel rotatable with respect to the rest of said collecting apparatus; and

means for releasably mounting said collecting apparatus to said lawnmower such that said discharge opening is substantially aligned with said collecting opening to cause clippings to flow into said collection space, and such that said at least one wheel is in a stowed condition and supports substantially no weight of said collecting apparatus when said collecting apparatus is mounted to said lawnmower;

wherein said at least one wheel at least partially supports said collecting apparatus upon the detachment of said collecting apparatus from said lawnmower to facilitate hauling away clippings in said collecting apparatus.

2. The implement of claim 1, wherein said collecting apparatus has an open top and further includes a removable screen over said open top to resist the escape of clippings from said collection space during operation of said lawnmower and hauling of clippings in said collecting apparatus, said screen being removable from the rest of said collecting apparatus without the use of tools to facilitate dumping the clippings out of said collection space.

3. The implement of claim 1, further comprising a handle attached to said collecting apparatus and movable between a mowing position and a hauling position, said handle being in said mowing position when said collecting apparatus is mounted to said lawnmower and in said hauling position when hauling clippings in said collecting apparatus.

4. The implement of claim 3, wherein said handle is pivotable about a pivot axis between said mowing and hauling positions, said implement further comprising means for releasably locking said handle in said hauling position to permit said collecting apparatus to be tipped clockwise and counterclockwise about an axis generally parallel to said handle pivot axis by a moment force applied to said handle.

5. The implement of claim 3, further comprising means for releasably locking said handle in said mowing position, wherein said means for releasably mounting said collecting apparatus to said lawnmower requires that said collecting apparatus be lifted to remove said collecting apparatus from said lawnmower, and wherein said collecting apparatus is liftable with respect to said lawnmower by way of said handle when said handle is locked in said mowing position.

6. The implement of claim 3, wherein said handle includes first and second arms and a cross member between first ends of said arms, wherein second ends of said arms are pivotally interconnected with said collecting apparatus, and wherein said handle is pivotable between said mowing and hauling positions.

7. The implement of claim 6, wherein said collecting apparatus includes first and second pivot pins fixed with respect to said substantially rigid walls and defining a pivot axis for said handle, wherein said second ends of said first and second arms each have pivot apertures into which said first and second pivot pins are respectively received to interconnect said handle to said collecting apparatus such that said handle is pivotable about said pivot axis.

8. The implement of claim 7, wherein said collecting apparatus includes first and second guide pins fixed with respect to said substantially rigid walls; wherein said second ends of said first and second arms each have arcuate guide slots into which said first and second guide pins are respectively received; and wherein said guide slots describe an arc followed by said second ends of said first and second arms when said handle is pivoted with respect to said collecting apparatus such that said guide pins remain in said guide slots during handle pivoting.

9. The implement of claim 8, wherein each of said pivot apertures and guide slots include hauling portions, wherein said handle is substantially prevented from pivoting with respect to said collecting apparatus when said pivot pins and guide pins are received within said hauling portions of said pivot apertures and guide slots such that said collecting apparatus may be tipped clockwise and counterclockwise about an axis generally parallel to said handle pivot axis by moment forces applied to said handle.

10. The implement of claim 9, wherein said pivot pins and guide pins are moved into said hauling portions of said pivot apertures and guide slots by linearly moving said handle with respect to said collecting apparatus once said handle is in said hauling position.

11. The implement of claim 8, wherein each of said pivot apertures and guide slots include lifting portions, wherein said pivot pins and guide pins are movable into said lifting portions of said pivot aperture and guide slots when said handle is in said mowing position, and wherein said handle is substantially prevented from pivoting with respect to said collecting apparatus when said pivot pins and guide pins are received within said lifting portions such that said collecting apparatus may be lifted out of engagement with said lawnmower by grasping and lifting said handle.

12. The implement of claim 1, wherein said lawnmower includes a door pivotally attached to said deck and a biasing member biasing said door to a position covering said discharge opening; wherein said door must be opened to permit said collecting apparatus to be attached to said lawnmower, wherein said door engages a top surface of said collecting apparatus when said collecting apparatus is attached to said lawnmower; and wherein said biasing member biases said collecting apparatus to remain mounted on said lawnmower when said door engages said top surface of said collecting apparatus.

13. A cart adapted to be removably mounted to a lawnmower and collect vegetation clippings from a lawnmower, and also adapted for use as a utility cart for lawn and garden applications, the cart comprising:

a body defined by a plurality of substantially rigid walls, said walls at least partially defining a collection space;

a collecting opening through which vegetation clippings flow from the lawnmower into said collection space when said cart is mounted to the lawnmower; and

at least one wheel rotatable with respect to the rest of said cart, said wheel being in a stowed position in which it supports substantially no weight of said cart when said cart is mounted to the lawnmower;

wherein said at least one wheel at least partially supports said cart upon the detachment of said cart from the lawnmower to facilitate hauling away clippings in said cart.

14. The cart of claim 13, further comprising an open top and a removable screen over said open top to resist the escape of clippings from said collection space, said screen being removable from the rest of said cart without the use of tools to facilitate dumping the clippings out of said collection space.

15. The cart of claim 13, further comprising a handle movable between a stowed position and a deployed position, said handle being in said stowed position when said cart is mounted to the lawnmower and in said deployed position when hauling clippings in said cart.

16. The cart of claim 15, further comprising means for releasably locking said handle in said stowed position to enable said cart to be lifted by said handle.

17. The cart of claim 15, wherein said handle is pivotable about a pivot axis between said stowed and deployed positions, said cart further comprising means for releasably locking said handle in said deployed position to enable said cart to be pivoted about an axis generally parallel to said pivot axis by applying a moment force to said handle.

18. The cart of claim 13, wherein said body includes a substantially rigid bottom wall having a plurality of edges and a plurality of substantially rigid walls extending up from respective ones of said edges except for one open edge of said bottom wall, and wherein said collecting opening is defined between two of said walls and above said open edge.

19. The cart of claim 13, further comprising first and second mounting pins above said collecting opening, said mounting pins being adapted to be received within slots on the lawnmower such that said cart hangs down from said pins with said collecting opening aligned with a discharge opening of the lawnmower.